

LECTURE IV THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN GENESIS

Genesis 1-2 is about the King of the Universe creating a kingdom on earth – a perfect kingdom filled with beauty and wonder.

So now let see how the pattern of God's Kingdom is developed in Genesis 1-2.

Now let me say right at the beginning that I am going to take a different approach to Genesis.

I shall not be doing a detailed study of the passages as such – and the matter concerning the historicity of the Genesis account of creation is assumed, my purpose is to relate Genesis to my theme of the Kingdom, specifically God's great plan of redemption through Christ – in fact, in essence, we will be looking at Christ in Genesis.

So we will be painting, as it were, with broad strokes – hopefully it will not be like an impressionistic piece of art.

Having said this, let me make it clear where I stand regarding the historicity of Genesis 1-11 – I believe that it is to be interpreted literally, in other words, it is a historical account to the events recorded.

Evangelicals on the whole reject all forms of Macro evolution.

What most people do not realise is that it is a theory and has never been proved scientifically in spite of the claims that it is scientific.

Later discoveries in science have disproved the theory of evolution.

Many brilliant scientists over the past 20 years have demonstrated that there is no scientific evidence that the various life forms came through random mutations where one 'kind' of life changed into another kind of life.

For example, the DNA of the various life forms is fixed and cannot change.

This does not mean that there cannot be changes within the kinds, called micro-evolution.

Darwin based his theory on his observation of micro-evolution and from that he jumped to Macro-evolution [changes of kind].

Useful books if you wish to pursue the debunking of evolutionism.

Phillip Johnson – Darwin in Trial – Intervarsity Press [ISBN 0 8308 7895]
Edit: William A Dembski – Darwin's Nemesis – IVP – [ISBN 10 0 8308 2810 2eD

KING OF THE KINGDOM.

1. Creation owes its existence to God – he alone is God and therefore Sovereign Ruler [1:1-2].

Let us look at Psalm 95:3-7 where we are specifically told that,

God is the king of creation (Psalm 95:3-7)

*PS 95:3 For the LORD is the great God,
the great King above all gods.*

*PS 95:4 In his hand are the depths of the earth,
and the mountain peaks belong to him.*

*PS 95:5 The sea is his, for he made it,
and his hands formed the dry land.*

*PS 95:6 Come, let us bow down in worship,
let us kneel before the LORD our Maker;*

*PS 95:7 for he is our God
and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care.*

Do you see what the Psalmist is arguing here?

How do you know God is the King?

Well look at the world - he made it.

He made the lowest points of the earth, the highest points, the wet bits, the dry bits - he made it all.

Look at Isaiah 40 which also brings together God as Creator and as Sovereign Ruler.

*ISA 40:10 See, the Sovereign LORD comes with power,
and his arm rules for him.*

*See, his reward is with him,
and his recompense accompanies him.*

*ISA 40:12 Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand,
or with the breadth of his hand marked off the heavens?*

*Who has held the dust of the earth in a basket,
or weighed the mountains on the scales
and the hills in a balance?*

*ISA 40:15 Surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket;
they are regarded as dust on the scales;
he weighs the islands as though they were fine dust.*

*ISA 40:17 Before him all the nations are as nothing;
they are regarded by him as worthless
and less than nothing.*

*ISA 40:18 To whom, then, will you compare God?
What image will you compare him to?*

ISA 40:21 Do you not know?

Have you not heard?

Has it not been told you from the beginning?

Have you not understood since the earth was founded?

*ISA 40:22 He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth,
and its people are like grasshoppers.*

*He stretches out the heavens like a canopy,
and spreads them out like a tent to live in.*

*ISA 40:23 He brings princes to naught
and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing.*

*ISA 40:24 No sooner are they planted,
no sooner are they sown,
no sooner do they take root in the ground,
than he blows on them and they wither,
and a whirlwind sweeps them away like chaff.*

*ISA 40:25 "To whom will you compare me?
Or who is my equal?" says the Holy One.*

*ISA 40:26 Lift your eyes and look to the heavens:
Who created all these?*

*He who brings out the starry host one by one,
and calls them each by name.*

*Because of his great power and mighty strength,
not one of them is missing.*

ISA 40:28 Do you not know?

Have you not heard?

*The LORD is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.*

That essentially is the way the Bible interprets the creation account – it is establishing beyond all doubt that creator of all things he is also ruler over all.

Don't forget when this account was written, just after the exodus.

Now this was a radical message in the context of the time when Moses wrote this record.

For 400 years God's people had been in Egypt with their multiplicity of gods, each in control of some aspect of life.

In Genesis God was teaching Israel that he alone is king over all things, including the earth, for he created all things.

That was the lesson God taught them through the plagues, for each plague was specifically directed against an Egyptian deity.

This is shown so clearly in YAHWEH'S confrontation with the gods of Egypt.

Dramatically, convincingly God shows that the pagan gods are nothing – they are powerless – they only have the power that men attribute to them.

That is the meaning and significance of the **plagues**, which must not be viewed as a few random miracles.

These plagues struck at the very heart of Egypt's faith.

The Egyptians believed that each of the many gods controlled vital aspects of Egyptian existence from life to death.

Now, in a series of 10 judgments, the gods of the pagans were challenged by the Lord and defeated.

The Pharaoh asked, '*Who is the Lord, that I should obey him?*' Through the subsequent judgments, God announced, 'The Egyptians will know that I am the Lord' [Ex 7:5].

Through the plagues God demonstrated the powerlessness of the gods of the Egyptians - '*I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt*' [Ex 12:12]

The first plague, the turning to blood of the floodwaters of the Nile, set the pattern for the others [Exodus 7:17-20]

In each encounter, the gods of Egypt were found wanting.

Thus the plagues was a demonstration by God of his name – his essence – his power – his authority showing that He was the only true sovereign God.

That was the lesson Israel had to learn, but also the Egyptians – that God is sovereign – he alone is the creator of all created things and he controls and rules over all things.

Yahweh's dealing with Pharaoh proves that even the evil that men do is under the direct control of God – although God is not the origin or the cause of the evil – nevertheless he uses it to achieve his own purposes.

God's act of creation establishes him as Sovereign Ruler = the King.

THE PLACE OF THE KINGDOM – LAND

2. God created a perfect universe and earth filled with beauty and order [1:1-25].
 - 2.1 Order created by his word, not chaos.
 - 2.2 God created a perfect material creation.

What makes this a place of wonder and beauty is the Presence of God.

It is what we can call 'heaven on earth' for where God is, there is heaven.

This point is important when we consider the meaning and significance of the Tabernacle, the Temple, and later Revelation 21.

God creates a perfect, harmonious, and beautiful place – King + Place.

THE PEOPLE OF THE KINGDOM

3. God creates a people and delegates responsibility [1:26-30] [2:1-17].
 - 3.1 Man to exercise godly dominion over God's creation because he is created in God's image.
 - 3.2 To reproduce and fill the earth.
 - 3.3 To subdue and rule [government] of God's creation including human culture on God's behalf.
 - 3.4 This involves labour [cultivation, production, stewardship [2:4-15].
 - 3.5 Rest [2:1-3] [SHALOM].

What do we mean by the image of God and how does it help us to make connections with the story line?

First of all, let us clear up one technical point.

There is no difference between the words "**Image**" and "**Likeness**".

These two terms do not refer to two separate aspects of man's nature with reference to God.

- But what do we mean when we say man is created in the image of God?

Basically it means that in some way we are similar to God. Both words refer to something similar but not identical.

- In what way similar?

Now theologians have discussed this matter for centuries and there has been no absolute agreement on the meaning of this phrase.

One thing we can be certain of is that the image of God does not refer to the fact that we have physical bodies and that in this way we resemble God for we know that God does not have physical form. God is spirit.

Some believe that the image of God consists in man's intellectual ability, his ability to reason, others in his sense of right and wrong and ability to choose and still others, in man's original purity or his dominion over the earth.

It would seem to me that all these ways of understanding image are too narrow and too specific.

When we try and evaluate these different views, we are like the blind men trying to describe an elephant simply by touch, each only feeling one small part; all these aspects have some truth in them but they are not the whole truth.

When the original readers read '*Let us make man in our image after our likeness*', they would have understood this to mean, '*Let us make man to be like us and to represent us.*'

That is what those two words meant.

The rest of Scripture fills in more details to explain this.

In fact, a full understanding of man's likeness to God requires a full understanding of who God is in his being and in his actions.

We can say that in every way in which we are like God is part of our being in his image and likeness.

In other words, the image of God in man cannot be confined to one or other aspect of his being – but to the totality of his being.

This means that man alone is capable of having a conscious personal relationship with the Creator and of responding to him, that man can know God and understand what the Creator desires of him, that man can love, worship, and obey his Maker.

That brings us to the only man who most perfectly reflected the image of God – the Lord Jesus Christ [more about that later].

So perhaps the best way to understand the image of God in man is to look at the ideal, the perfect man, the God-man, the Lord Jesus Christ. That is what the NT writers specifically state,

II Corinthians 4: 4 The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

COL 1:15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

Hebrews 1:3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being,

It means that when the Creator of the universe wanted to create something more like himself than the rest of creation, he made us.

The Bible says that *PS 19:1 The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.*

Think of the galaxies, the planets, the world of plants and animals – how magnificent – think of the angelic hosts – but we are more like God than any of these.

But it goes further does it not?

For the eternal Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ did not come as a mighty angel to this earth – he did not come as some powerful spiritual being, he came – as man.

Chapter 2 – we see that God delegated responsibilities to man as God's image bearer, God made man his **vice-regent**.

Although God remained sovereign, he appointed humans as rulers on his behalf – they had to manage God's kingdom on earth.

Adam had to exercise godly rule over God's creation with the assistance of Eve.

God also designs relationships between man and woman – marriage, where we see that marriage is not cultural but creational – God's intention for man and a reflection and model of the Inter-Trinitarian relationship – Father, Son and Holy Spirit and also our relationship with this Trinitarian God.

So God appointed man to rule, and subdue creation – he must fill it, he must work and make the earth a fruitful place. [NB: worldview – cultural mandate.]

So Genesis shows us that God is **King**, Eden represents God's **place**, Adam and Eve are the beginning of **God's people** who are appointed as vice-regents over the kingdom.

Notice how this is explained in **Psalms 8**

*PS 8:5 You made him a little lower than the heavenly beingsⁿ
and crowned him with glory and honor.*

*PS 8:6 You made him ruler over the works of your hands;
you put everything under his feet: PS 8:7 all flocks and herds, and the
beasts of the field,*

*PS 8:8 the birds of the air,
and the fish of the sea,
all that swim the paths of the seas.*

God gave Adam and Eve responsibility to extend the borders of Eden to the whole world – actually to extend the kingdom – God's rule throughout the world – so that the whole world would be worshipping God – that is what God commanded them to do.

We see that God also designs relationships between man and woman – marriage, where we see that marriage is not cultural but creational – God's intention for man and a reflection and model of the Inter-Trinitarian relationship – Father, Son and Holy Spirit and also our relationship with this Trinitarian God.

THE RULE OF THE KING

4. A king must rule – it is a rule for the good of mankind [Gen 2:15-16].

God exercises kingly rule for the good of his people and while they exercised their rule under God, everything functioned perfectly – everything was harmonious.

And that would be reflected in obeying God's commands, obeying his Word.

But we know that something happened to change all this.

REBELLION IN THE KINGDOM - THE FALL OF MAN – GENESIS 3

This is the stage of Redemptive History called the Fall.

Outline of Genesis 3:

1. The Serpent's Temptation to Sin (v. 1-5)
2. Man's Commission of Sin (v. 6-7)
3. God's Confrontation of the Sinners (v. 8-13)
4. God's Curse upon Sin (v. 14-19)
5. The Results of Man's Fall into Sin (v. 20-24)

Notice that each division of the outline is stated to show the development of the theme of sin.

Some conclusions you could draw about the teaching of this passage would include the following.

- Sin disrupts God's order of things.

The relationships between the man and the woman and creation and God are all put out of harmony.

- Sin corrupts the blessedness of God's gifts.
- The blessings of dominion and reproduction are now filled with pain, sorrow and sweat.
- Sin is disobedience to God's Word, and temptation to sin attacks the truthfulness and goodness of God's Word. God punishes sin, but also makes a way of salvation.

Genesis 3:15 promises a descendent from the woman who will have victory over the serpent and not fail like Adam did.

Genesis 3:15 with the two humanities it speaks of leads to the Cain and Abel conflict and the genealogies that follow.

In **v. 21** God sheds the blood of an animal to cover the shame of Adam and Eve's sin.

Sin brings death, but God provides a substitute death to cover (make atonement for) sinners.

Back to the detail of the story of the Fall.

Man refused to exercise his vice-regency under God's dominion.

He wanted to exercise his dominion independent of God.

So man lost his lost his vice-regency, which is the implication of Genesis 3:17f

GE 3:17 To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,'

*"Cursed is the ground because of you;
through painful toil you will eat of it
all the days of your life.*

*GE 3:18 It will produce thorns and thistles for you,
and you will eat the plants of the field.*

*GE 3:19 By the sweat of your brow
you will eat your food
until you return to the ground,
since from it you were taken;
for dust you are
and to dust you will return."*

The kingdom no longer cooperated under man.

Let me clarify something that is often misunderstood.

It was not God who lost dominion over the earth – don't think that Satan now controls the earth [Satan lied when he offered the kingdoms of the world to the Lord Jesus Christ].

God's absolute control can be seen in the fact that Satan also came under sentence of judgment.

God remained in control.

It was man who lost control of the kingdom.

It was God who put creation under the curse not Satan as Paul so clearly states,

20 For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹ thatⁿ the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

God made man 'lord of the earth' and so that when he failed to obey God, to exercise his dominion under God, part of his punishment was that creation was affected, it no longer submitted to his rule.

Because of sin he was not allowed to enjoy the paradise into which God had placed him.

Now it is important at this point to show the connection with Christ.

1. Let us consider the promise embedded in the curse on the serpent.

GE 3:14 So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this,

*"Cursed are you above all the livestock
and all the wild animals!*

*You will crawl on your belly
and you will eat dust
all the days of your life.*

*GE 3:15 And I will put enmity
between you and the woman,
and between your offspringⁿ and hers;
he will crushⁿ your head,
and you will strike his heel."*

God declared war on Satan – the seed of the woman is going to crush his head, and in doing so the serpent will bruise the heel of the seed. [Genesis 3:15].

It is against this background that we must understand God's promise to Abraham of a seed.

And Paul connects the dots in Galatians

4:4 But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, ⁵ to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. ⁶ Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba,ⁿ Father." ⁷ So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.

Galatians 3

⁶ The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say "and to seeds," meaning many people, but "and to your seed,"

GAL 3:19 What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come.

GAL 3:26 You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, ²⁷ for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

2. In the second place the image of God in man.

The fact that man fell into sin did not eradicate the image of God in man.

Every single human being, no matter how much the image of God is marred by sin, or illness, or weakness, or age, still has the status of being in God's image and therefore must be treated with dignity and respect.

What happened is the image of God in man is now distorted because the image of God, which Paul calls the new self, created to be like God consists of true righteousness and holiness.

Did God leave man in this state? No.

And in this way God also did something to restore his image in man.

How? He sent someone who reflected his image perfectly, the last Adam – his eternal Son – the seed of the woman.

And that is where Christ comes in – for he is the perfect image of God as Paul states in II Corinthians 4,

⁴ The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

And he is referring to our Lord come in the flesh – the God-man.

Colossians 1,¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

He came and showed us what the image of God really looks like.

But he not only came to show us – he came to restore the image of God in us.

That is the message of the Gospel.

Our redemption in Christ means that we can, even in this life, progressively grow into more and more of the likeness of God.

That is why Paul says that as Christians we have a new nature that is 'being renewed in the knowledge after the image of its creator' [Col 3:10].

When we are born again, when we receive a new nature through the Holy Spirit, he begins to change us – as Paul says in II Corinthians 3 – from one degree of glory to another degree of glory.

This is what it means to be a Christian.

This is what is happening to us as Christians.

We are not only forgiven – saved – God is restoring that image

Throughout this life, as we grow in Christian maturity we grow in greater likeness to God.

In fact the goal for which God redeemed us is that we might become increasingly conformed to the image of Jesus Christ, which is nothing less than the image of God in us.

And one day, when Christ returns, God has promised that just as we have been like Adam, we shall also be like Christ.

Or as Paul states in I Corinthians 15:49 *"Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven."*

In Jesus we see human likeness to God as it was intended to be, and it should cause us to rejoice that God has predestined us to be conformed to the image of his son and that when he appears we shall be like him.

3. Thirdly, let us consider how everything lost is restored in Jesus Christ -- through Adam all mankind are sinners and facing condemnation.

Paul explains the connection in Romans 5:12f where he compares and contrasts Jesus to Adam.

RO 5:12 Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned-- ¹³ for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. ¹⁴ Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come.

RO 5:15 But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! ¹⁶ Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. ¹⁷ For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

RO 5:18 Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. ¹⁹ For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

Adam failed to obey one command in an uncorrupted world and brought sin with its penalty of condemnation to his offspring.

Jesus Christ on the other hand to do what Adam failed to do, to obey the Father – where Adam failed, Jesus succeeded and brought righteousness with its blessing, eternal life to all who place their faith in him.

Jesus is head of a new creation – in him there is a new humanity – a redeemed humanity.

In him all things are restored.

4. Consider in the fourth place how God showed the way he would deal with sin.

After they sinned, Adam and Eve tried to cover themselves – ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

Why did they cover themselves?

They must have felt the shame of their sin so they tried to cover their shame – but it was ineffective.

Now notice what God did.

GE 3:21 The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.

God covered their shame. How?

By providing skins.
Where did God get the skins?
God killed an animal.

For the first time in history, blood was shed to provide a covering for their sin.

Here God was showing that without the shedding of blood there could be no forgiveness of sin – perhaps the idea of atonement as a covering can also be traced here.

It is obvious that God had prescribed a way of approaching Him through the shedding of blood, on the basis of the coming Redeemer, whose shed blood would be the price of our redemption.

5. In the fifth place let us consider the matter of man's dominion and how dominion is restored in Jesus Christ.

God gave man dominion and man lost his dominion.

That is what we see in Genesis 3 and it is explained in Hebrews 2 where the writer refers to Psalms 8 where the psalmist, as we saw, expressed his amazement that God should give man dominion over the earth.

Let's pause and look how the writer to the Hebrews puts it.

RECLAIMING MAN'S POSITION AS VICE-REGENT

Notice the astonishing statement the writer makes in verse 5 *HEB 2:5 It is not to angels that he has subjected the world to come, about which we are speaking*

Despite the status and dignity of angels, God never intended for them to have authority over the world to come.

What is "the world to come"?

It is the inhabited earth, and particularly the renewed earth, the new earth, the restored earth.

As great and powerful as the angels are, they will not rule this new world order.

Those who will must indeed be glorious if the angels will not enjoy this privilege.

Who will then?

He gives us the answer in verses 6-7, which is a quote from Psalm 8.

⁶ *But there is a place where someone has testified:*

*"What is man that you are mindful of him,
the son of man that you care for him?*

*HEB 2:7 You made him a littleⁿ lower than the angels;
you crowned him with glory and honor*

HEB 2:8 and put everything under his feet."ⁿ

Now he is not talking about the Messiah, as some people think.

The term '**son of man**' is often used in the OT to refer to mankind – and it is applied to Christ, the Messiah as the perfect, ideal son of man.

He only mentions the Messiah, our LORD Jesus Christ from verse 9.

This Psalm refers to mankind.

The terms "son of man" = mankind.

It refers to God's original destiny for mankind.

The writer is taking us back to Genesis 1,

GE 1:26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth,ⁿ and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

GE 1:28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

That was God's original destiny for mankind.

But notice what he says in 8th verse of Hebrews 2, Yet at present we do not see everything subject to him.

What does that mean?

That man is no longer in the position God placed him – he is no longer what he was meant to be.

We cannot see man's control over all of nature.

That is not because his control is invisible, but because it does not exist.

Something happened to change man's destiny.

The writer is taking us back to Genesis 3.

Because of his sin, as we have seen, Adam his place of authority, his vice-regency.

Man is now under the penalty and power of sin, in bondage to Satan was no longer qualified to rule.
How tragic! What a fall!

From a position of supreme authority under God, he was now a slave – in bondage of Satan, the enemy of God.

Was this the end of the story?

Notice what he writes in verse 9

. 9 But we see Jesus,

What is he talking about?

The writer draws a contrast between man's pitiful condition and what God has done on behalf of man.

On the one hand we see man, fallen, lost, a slave to Satan, in misery, under condemnation, having given up his authority to rule, but on the other hand, we see Jesus.

God sent another man.

The ideal man.

He did not create another Adam.

He sent his Son to be the last Adam.

This Adam would not fail for this was the God/man.

By dethroning man on earth, Satan thought he would dethrone God's reign on earth.

But God sent someone, his Son, as a man to defeat Satan and reclaim God's rule through man.

Man failed, but God's sent someone to reclaim what man lost so that God's purposes for man would be fulfilled.

The point the writer makes here is that God's purpose for mankind is fulfilled in Jesus, on our behalf.

MAN'S DESTINY RECLAIMED IN JESUS.

It was for that reason that he "was made a little lower than the angels..."

This is of course a direct reference to our LORD's incarnation.

He, who was with God, took our nature.

He became like us.

As John wrote: ***"The Word became flesh."***

He came and identified himself with us.

Just how closely he identified himself with us becomes clear in the succeeding verses: -

Verse 14: He shared our flesh and blood.

Verse 16 - He was born a Jew "For surely it is not angels he helps but Abraham's descendants."

He became man and specifically a Jew.

Verse 17 His identification was complete.

He became an ordinary man.

Verse 18 - He suffered temptation and then death.

His coming to earth and his death on the cross stands at the very centre of this - "now crowned with glory and honour because he suffered death".

Through his birth, death, resurrection and exaltation, he became; **Our Substitute**

The wages of sin is death- he died our death.

He came to remove the curse so that man could regain dominion.

It is staggering that the Creator of angels, the head of angels, the LORD of all, should for our sakes for a time become lower than the angels.

Why? Verse 10 to bring ***"many sons to glory."***

Parallel in Romans 8

19 The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed.

What does this mean?

He came to restore us to our rightful place as the crown of God's creation with full authority to rule over the earth.

Jesus came to re-establish God's rule on earth through man.

This is what the Kingdom of God/Kingdom of Heaven means; God's will done on earth as it is in heaven.

As the Eternal Son of God, the Kingdom was always his, but now he received it as a human, on behalf of man.

He came to reclaim the Kingdom for man and to rule on behalf of man – he came to re-establish the original divine order for earth with man as God's vice-regent.

That is what the NT proclaims.

That is the Good News of the Kingdom.

And as a demonstration of this Matthew tell us that

MT 4:23 Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.

Matthew 12:28 if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

And likewise he commanded his disciples, Matthew 10:7 *As you go, preach this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near.'*⁸ *Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy,ⁿ drive out demons*

What was the significance of this?

Jesus was reasserting God's proper order, the order disrupted by sin.

Adam should have exercised authority over the serpent, he should have cast him out, so Jesus did what he did not do, he reasserted man's authority over the **demonic forces**.

Because **disease**, like demon possession was a disruption of the proper order of creation with man over creation, Jesus healed – restoring the proper order of man over creation.

We see this in his **nature miracles** when he calmed the storm – he was exercising man's vice regency over nature.

All this demonstrated that the kingdom of God has invaded the present age in Jesus Christ.

That was the purpose of the miracles.

His miracles were an integral part of his work of redemption – unique to him and the apostles whom he specially commissioned.

When God raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand – what was this?

Complete dominion was restored to man, through Jesus – the original order was restored.

Coming back to our passage in Hebrews – right now, it is Christ who is exercising kingdom rule for us.

Christ now rules the kingdom and when he has subjugated the powers of evil, then the proper vice regency of man will be fully restored.

It has not yet been restored to us fully – why?

Go back to Romans 8

19 The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed.

23 Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? 25 But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

We are not yet made perfect.

We still struggle with sin.

We are still in our sin cursed bodies.

Only at the end of the age – when we are perfect, and Jesus has destroyed every kingdom set up against God, when the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdom of our Lord and Christ, he will hand it back to God – and God will restore the original order, with man in authority over the earth. [I Corinthians 15:24-28]

That is what Jesus meant when he said in the Beatitudes

*MT 5:3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*MT 5:10 Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

That is what we mean in the prayer,

*MT 6:10 your kingdom come,
your will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.*

BUT WHAT ABOUT NOW?

It is vital to understand that the kingdom of God has already invaded the present evil age – we are already seated with Christ in heavenly places, our citizenship is already in heaven.

Already we are recipients of some of the kingdom blessings, like eternal life [life of the kingdom], gifts and fruit of the Spirit, forgiveness, regeneration, justification and freedom.

Right now it is our duty to proclaim the presence of the kingdom, which is why Jesus linked his authority with what is known as the Great Commission

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them inⁿ the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

We must proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom and invite others to submit to Christ's Lordship and become members of the kingdom.

But in addition we must witness to the reality of the presence of that kingdom right now in our lives.

That has practical implications in the way we live now.

In our work, in our relationships we are to demonstrate what the kingdom of God looks like.

There is no area of life that now does not fall under his Lordship.

Think of what it means to exercise His Lordship in your work, in your studies, in your relationships.

This gives us purpose and meaning – knowing that everything we do, we are doing with the aim of reflecting Christ's Lordship – and as preparation for the time when you and I will fully exercise vice regency in the new heaven and the new earth.

The story of the Bible is the story of God restoring kingdom rule to man – and renewing all things and it all points one way, to the Lord Jesus Christ.

In many ways we may even say that the unifying principle in the Bible is Jesus Christ.

So you see how Genesis 1-3 fits into the big story, the revelation of God's great plan of redemption – to restore the kingdom.

In other words, we see what the text itself says about God's kingdom theme in creation.

This is the first step to studying a portion of the Bible.

Identify the main theme of the text in terms of Redemptive History and outline the passage according to it.

This makes use of our first basic principle of interpretation.

How this applies to us.

There is no tree that we are not to eat from nor can anyone repeat what Adam did.

The passage applies to us in showing the importance of submission to God's Word which we are restored to only in Christ.

If Adam failed to obey this one command, how much more am I going to fail in obeying God's entire word.

That is why Jesus Christ came.

I trust His obedience on my behalf, not my own obedience, because I fail along with Adam.

Trusting Christ's righteousness and being redeemed by Him restores me to submission to God's Word.

My obedience cannot be motivated by or based upon keeping a law by my own power.

Only motivated by Christ's grace and enabled by His Spirit can I obey God.

Put me in Adam's position and I fail like he did.

Put me in Christ and I have his victory to see me through.

Only in Christ can I exercise the godly dominion of God's image in my labour, family, etc.

And that dominion is expressed not only in my labour but also in the evangelism of making disciples – bringing others into God's kingdom through the gospel of Jesus Christ.

This is the message of Paul's letter to the Ephesians.